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SUBJECT: ZAGREB WEEKLY ACTIVITY REPORT - MARCH 12, 2009

11. (U) NEW WEBSITE FOR HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL SITE:

The Jasenovac Memorial Site and Museum has launched a new website providing information on the WWII era atrocities committed there as well as a searchable database of the approximately 75,000 victims identified to date. Jasenovac was the largest extermination camp in operation under the fascist Ustasa regime during WWII. Exact figures of victims are disputed but consisted mainly of Serbs, Roma, and Jews. The website is currently only in Croatian with plans for an English translation. The online database of victims requires only minimal knowledge of Croatian and will be an invaluable resource for families of survivors unable to travel to the area for research. The website can be found at <http://www.jusp-jasenovac.hr>. The searchable database of identified victims is located at <http://www.jusp-jasenovac.hr/Default.aspx?sid=7618>.
(JNCallahan)

12. (U) DEMINING PROJECTS TO HELP RETURNEES; SIGNS MISSING:

Emboff accompanied representatives from the Croatian Mine Action Centar (CROMAC) and the municipality of Pakrac on a tour of potential mine clearing projects. USG funds would pay for mine removal at five sites, four of which contain known minefields and the fifth is mine-suspected. Together with other efforts in the area funded by the Croatian state budget, the projects would clear all land along the road from Pakrac through four Serb-returnee villages. The homes and yards have already been cleared, but agricultural land needed to sustain villagers is still mine contaminated. A majority of the newly reconstructed homes, however, are already inhabited by returnees. Also along the road from Pakrac, Emboff noticed several mine warning markers were missing (their locations are marked on highly detailed maps maintained by CROMAC). Recently, media report that thousands of signs have been stolen. A CROMAC representative told Emboff that every year, CROMAC visits all sites to replace missing signs and that it is a big problem. She said several people have been charged for stealing the signs. In one case, a man stole three signs to build a dog house. She also said hunters sometimes steal signs and repost them to protect their favorite hunting grounds as the signs keep others off the land, including police, and even enable them to hunt out of season. (CZimmer)

13. (U) GLAVAS FIGHTING BACK IN OSIJEK:

Despite press reports that Branimir Glavas and his party the Croatian Democratic Alliance of Slavonia and Baranja (HDSSB) are struggling under the weight of Glavas's ongoing war crimes trial (reftel A), the HDSSB has gained some unlikely coalition partners and is touting its electoral momentum. In a surprising move, the Croatian People's Party (HNS) decided to back the HDSSB's candidate for mayor, current county prefect Kresimir Bubalo (reftel B). HNS party chief for Osijek County, Ivan Vrdoljak, is likely to get one of the two deputy mayor slots. Similarly, the HDSSB hammered out a

coalition deal with the Social Democratic Party (SDP) for the mayoral race in Donji Miholjac and in Slatina. While in Beli Manastir, the HDSSB, SDP, and HNS will back a joint candidate that has yet to be announced. Furthermore, the HDSSB is in close talks with the Croatian Peasants Party (HSS) for a coalition at the county (zupanija) level as well as joint mayoral candidates for 10 other smaller towns in the area. (Note: While these party coalitions are clearly out-of-step with the composition of the national-level coalition government, and most coalition pairings in the rest of Croatia, the city of Osijek has had 5 different coalition governments since the last local election in 2005 and witnessed nearly every pairing between leftish-oriented and rightist-oriented parties possible. End Note) (D. Meges)

14. (U) GLAVAS WAR CRIMES TRIAL UPDATES:

On March 5th and 9th, Emboffs attempted to attend the war crimes trial of Branimir Glavas and several other defendants, but on both dates the hearings were postponed when one or more defendants called in sick. On March 9, the hearing was postponed due to the non-appearance of the second and the third accused, Krnjak and Getos-Magdic. The presiding judge warned that if Krnjak did not appear for the hearing scheduled for March 12th, he would order his detention as Krnjak had been found fit to stand trial by a court expert. All defendants were released from detention in December after the Constitutional Court ruled their detention was excessively long during the oft-delayed trial, particularly since the prime defendant, Glavas, was not detained due to his parliamentary immunity. (CZimmer)

BRADTKE